THE AUGUR

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9301 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

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MEL WACKS, Editor DR. BARUCH KANAEL, Contributing Editor.

Coin of the Month

PILATE'S AUGUR COIN (AND HOW ANCIENT COINS WERE MADE)

This month's featured coin should be familiar, for it is the small bronze prutah of Pontius Pilate featuring an augur's wand . . . the symbol which our publication features on its masthead. The complete story of this historic coin was told in our first issue. Briefly, the ancient augur (priest) used his curved staff to draw a rectangle in the ground; he then made predictions based on the action of birds above the consecrated geometric pattern. The Roman Emperor Tiberius, whose name appears on this coin of Pilate, is known to have had a weakness for augurs and astrologers.

You will note that the coin pictured on the enclosed slide (courtesy of M. Shapiro) has half of the inscription missing due to the crude minting technique. Ancient Judaean bronzes rarely are found perfectly centered with full inscriptions. They were not important coins (e.g. silver pieces) and little care was given to their manufacture.

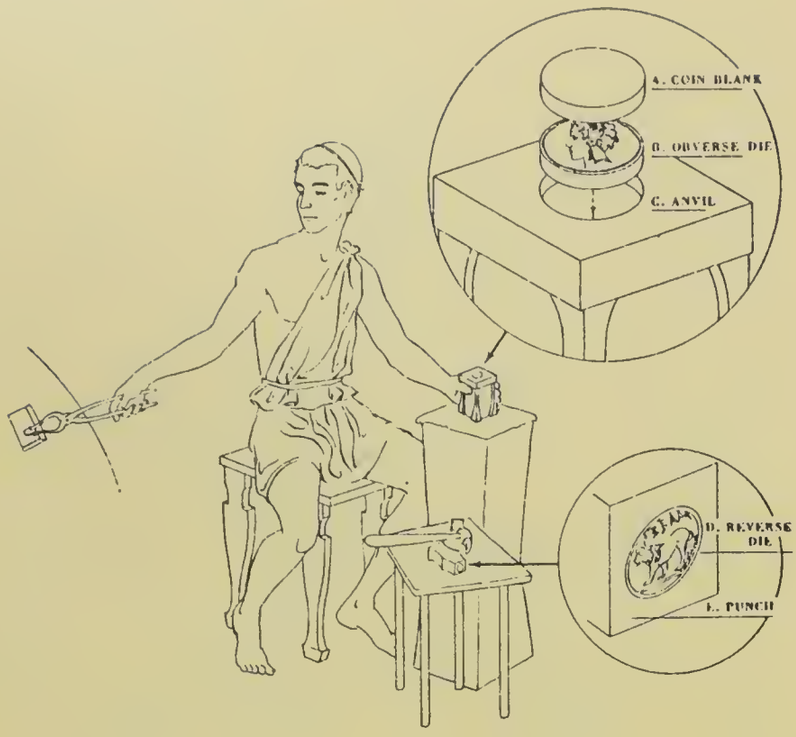
Pontius Pilate's Augur Coins, dated LIZ (30/31 A.D.) and LIH (31/32 A.D.).

Let us now examine the method which the ancients used to mint their coins. The following description has been excerpted from ARCHAEOLOGY AND TYPES OF GREEK COINS by Percy Gardner, originally published in 1883.

The coining implements of the Greeks were very simple. Of course machinery such as that now used was entirely unknown; anvil, hammer, and tongs, which are represented on the reverse of a denarius of the Carisia gens, which bears on the obverse a head of Moneta, were the implements used. First of all a die was cut, by what process will presently be stated, in intaglio, in bronze, brass or soft iron. This die was then let into a prepared hole in an anvil, so that its surface was a little below that of the anvil; on it was laid a blank shaped by casting into the size and form of the required coin, and heated to redness. At this stage the tongs would obviously be required to place the heated blank. On it was placed a bar of metal into which another die was inserted; and on the top of this bar one or more violent blows were struck with a hammer. The bar containing the upper die was then taken away, and the now stamped coin removed with the tongs and a fresh blank substituted in its place.

To some extent these statements are a matter of conjecture, for no Greek dies, so far as I know, have come down to our times. A few Roman dies exist, and a few dies of Gaulish coins, which are all of bronze or wrought iron, and all remarkable by the absence of a collar, and the simple fashion in which the dies work one against another.

Such in general outline was the coining process of the Greeks; and of the Romans, until about the time of Constantine steel dies and new processes came in.



The blank was merely placed between two nearly flat dies, nearly not quite flat (for the reverse of a Greek coin is nearly always concave), a fact for which the reason is obvious, otherwise the metal could hardly have been forced into the obverse die with sufficient energy. It now became necessary either to finish a coin at one blow of the hammer, or else so to strike successive blows that the blank should not move between. This could not have been easy, and it is the less surprising that an immense number of Greek coins are what is called double-struck; that is, have shifted during the hammering process. M. Mongez says that the blanks were sometimes withdrawn between the blows to be re-heated; this however appears to me most unlikely, as the workman could never have restored them to quite the same place from which he took them. The obverse die of a coin was the lower in striking, and the reverse type the upper.

As the dies were made of soft metal they very rapidly wore out, wore down and broke. Hence the enormous variety in detail of ancient coins. Seldom do we find two coins from one die, and continually we remark in the field of coins signs of fracture or decay in the dies. And the artists who were constantly at work making coin-dies thus learned to be rapid and careless in their work, but at the same time had immense practice. Among us a new die is designed at rare intervals; in Greece they were being continually cut at every mint. M. Mongez has gone carefully into the question with what tools these dies were cut, and gives it as the opinion of a practical engraver that all ancient dies down to the fifth centry A.D. were cut by means of the wheel, in the same manner as gems, and not with the graving tool, which was introduced in late Roman times, and is now exclusively employed. It appears that cutting by the wheel is the more rapid process by far. A pair of dies, says M. Mongez, which would take more than a month to engrave with a graver, could with the aid of a wheel be produced in six days. But the ancients, working in rougher and more hasty fashion, and with more practised hands, were far more expeditious. The usurper Marius, for instance, who reigned only three days, has left us a quantity of coins in more than one metal, and from a great variety of dies, and similar instances abound.

If we attentively consider any set of ancient coins we shall find abundant proof of the truth of the above statements. The round dots in which letters of inscriptions often terminate are a sure mark of the use of a wheel by the engravers. This may be noticed on coins of several periods. That coins were struck when hot is shewn by the reticulation of surface, which is especially notable in Macedonian coins; that they were cast in moulds before being struck is evident from the projections on their sides. Not only are coins double-struck, from the diffculty of holding them in one place during the minting operation, but they are in many other ways irregular. Sometimes the type is quite at the edge of the coin, sometimes it is confused and not fairly struck up, sometimes there is a blemish in the soft metal of the die. Sometimes by a too heavy blow of the hammer the edges of the coin were broken. Altogether, there must have co-existed in the production of a perfect coin a number of favourable chances; and it can scarcely be wondered that of the coins which reach us, not one in ten is without blemish of some kind. But at the same time this very variety and chance of coins makes them more interesting and gives them something of animation.

Note how letters all terminate in round dots on this denarius of the Second Revolt.

Extremely off-center bronze of Herod the Great.

Cracked flan on sestertius of Marcus Aurelius, c. 140-144 A.D.

MAJOR FINANCIAL ECHOES IN THE PAULINE LETTERS

(Conclusion)

by Stanley Clute

In 2 Corinthians the "ghosts" of I Cor. 9:7-18 have materialized and we now find Paul defending himself against critics in Corinth. Roetzel suggests that certain Jewish-Christian missionaries had come to Corinth and, in attempting to win loyalty, affection and support of the church there, had accused Paul of refusing to take money for his preaching either because of insecurity in his apostolate, or else because he planned to embezzle some of the money collected for the offering for the Jerusalem poor. He speculates that this criticism undermined Paul's efforts at raising a collection for Jerusalem.[8] In 2 Cor. 11:7-10 and 12:13, Paul replies with a superb flow of sarcasm to the allegations that have been made about his motives.

Athenian tetradrachm, 153/2 B.C.

Acts 18:1-4 gives an account of Paul's labours while he was staying at Corinth:

> "After this he left Athens and went to Corinth. There he fell in with a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, and his wife Priscilla; he had recently arrived from Italy because Claudius had issued an edict that all Jews should leave Rome. Paul approached them and, because he was of the same trade, he made his home with them and they carried on business together; they were tentmakers."

In I Cor. 4:11, Paul himself gives us an account of the sort of physical life he leads:

> "To this day we go hungry and thirsty and in rags; we are roughly handled; we wander from place to place; we wear ourselves out working with our own hands."

Even if Paul had demanded support from the congregations he lived among, it is doubtful that his impecunious situation would have changed noticeably. For, almost certainly, his congregations were poor, too—for Paul says to them in I Cor. 1:26:

> "Few of you are men of wisdom, by any human standard; few are powerful or highly born."

And, in 2 Cor. 8:2, he says of the Macedonian congregations:

> "Yet in all this they have been so exhuberantly happy that from the depths of their poverty, they have shown themselves lavishly openhanded."

The next matter to consider is Paul's collection for the poor of the Christian church at Jerusalem. In Galatians 2:10, Paul says of the "pillars" of the Jerusalem church, that is Peter, James and John:

> "All they asked was that we should keep their poor in mind, which was the very thing I made it my business to do."

First bronze coin struck in Jerusalem, in 132 B.C. by the Syrian King Antiochus VII.

We have, in Gal. 2:10, what is presumably the oldest textual reference to the collection, *if* Galatians is dated early (I emphasize this point because there is considerable dispute about how Galatians should be dated and where it should be placed in reference to the other Pauline letters). Keith Nickle sees in Paul's remark a double allusion, firstly to an earlier famine relief efforts among his Gentile congregations for the assistance of Jerusalem.[9] He believes that the earlier famine relief collection, which he dates in A.D. 48, was the prototype for Paul's great collection among the Gentiles.[10]

Bornkamm expresses the view that this second collection was not merely charity, but that it was also intended for the whole body of the Jerusalem church as a token of its special status among Christian communities; as a thank offering for the blessings which had come from Jerusalem into the rest of the world.[11]

He also suggests a possible connection between the delivery of the collection to Jerusalem and the Old Testament idea of an End wherein all nations were to go to Jerusalem bringing gifts with them.[12] This, in turn, suggests that Paul's expectation of the imminence of the Parousia, as evidenced in his letters, may have been a major influence in his placing such great emphasis on the collection.

I Cor. 16:1-4 suggests that the collection had already, perhaps, been introduced to the Christian community in Corinth, and that they had made certain inquiries about it. Paul directed that the collection be organized on lines similar to those already employed in Galatia. He agrees to have persons approved by the church accompany him to Jerusalem to deliver the collection, possibly to make certain that he is unable to appropriate any of it if questions about his motives had already been raised, but more probably as part of a representative group from the contributing churches, as indicated in Acts.

Galatian bronze of King Amyntas, 36-25 B.C., with Herakles and lion.

In 2 Corinthians we apparently have a collection of parts from several letters from Paul to the church at Corinth, within which the comments about the collection (chapters 8 and 9) originally belonged to two different letters. By the time Paul wrote these letters, much had happened: as previously noted, opponents of Paul had appeared in Corinth and impugned his motives. As Munck has noted,[13] this struggle between Paul and the Corinthian congregation, as well as the problems in Galatia (indicated by Paul's remarks

in Galatians), will have hampered the collection and imperilled its successful completion.

In 2 Cor. 12:11-18, Paul argues against the slurs on his intentions, possibly with some success for, later, in 2 Cor. 8, Titus is sent again to Corinth to work at raising the Corinthians' share of the collection. Paul chastises the Corinthians, contrasting their lack of support for the collection over the previous year unfavourably with the enthusiastic, though not large, donation from Macedonia. In a later letter, which included Chapter 9, Paul alters his argument and explains to the Corinthans that it was their earlier zeal for the collection which had inspired the Macedonian participation.

By the time the latter was written, Paul may have been reconciled to the Corinthian church. He was evidently impressed with its previous zeal in undertaking the collecting of funds for Jerusalem, before it was interrupted by his opponents, and he urges them to undertake it once again just as enthusiastically. He emphasizes his desire to avoid any criticism of his handling of the funds.

Bornkamm has suggested that Chapter 9 is Paul's final writing to the Corinthians about the collection.[14] Paul remains in Macedonia but requests that the collection be ready for his arrival in Corinth.

In keeping with his view that a thing must be done out of love if it is to mean anything (I Cor. 13), Paul exhorts the congregation to give, not reluctantly, not out of a sense of compulsion or obligation, but of their own free will, for "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). If they do this, he says, they will have ample for their own needs and for giving away as well; God will see to it.

Later, in Romans 15:25-29, Paul states that he is going to Jerusalem with the collection. In Rom. 15:27, he expands the scope of his argument in I Cor. 9:11:

> "If we have sown a spiritual crop for you, is it too much to expect from you a material harvest?"

and extends it to include the entire Gentile Christian church, as follows:

> "For if the Jewish Christians shared their spiritual treasures with the Gentiles, the Gentiles have a clear duty to contribute to their material needs"

Thus Paul exerts on the Gentile Christians a claim to partial relief for the Jewish Christians as perhaps epitomized in the Jerusalem church. I sincerely doubt that he ever intended this principle to be applied individually within each congregation, on a Gentile/Jew basis; he is speaking here on a much grander level.

Paul was aware of the enmity with which the Jews in Judaea regarded him. He may have felt that the gift to Jerusalem would help to bring a large number of non-Christian Jews around to a belief in Christianity as they saw how the belief was spreading among the Gentiles—the idea being the conversion of the Jews through jealousy, as expressed in Rom. 10:19. If he had any such idea in mind, he was surely disappointed in this respect. In fact, the gift was more likely to have has an opposite effect, for, as Munck has noted,[15] the Jews regarded the collection as an open infringement on the rights of the temple, feeling that Paul was instigating a rivalry with the traditional temple tax.

We can only conjecture whether the collection gift was well received by the Jewish Christian church at Jerusalem, for Acts does not tell us, nor do we hear any more about its reception from Paul after the letter to the Romans. Perhaps this silence is in itself an indication that the gift was not well received. For, from Rom. 15:32b it would appear that Paul was anxious about the forthcoming reception. Furthermore, it was during Paul's stay in Jerusalem, after having brought the collection, that he was arrested and ultimately sent to Rome for trial.

Before closing, it may be desirable to say a few words about a rather remarkable passage in Paul's correspondence: Rom. 13:1-7; Bornkamm has described it as an admonition to uprightness of the Christians as citizens.[16] In this instance we must understand his use of the world "citizens" in a figurative, rather than literal, sense, for not all Christians, even among the Gentile churches, will have been Roman citizens. Indeed, some were even slaves, as can be plainly seen, for example, by the case of Onesimus in Paul's letter to Philemon.

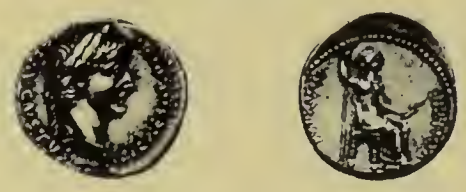
In Rom. 13:7, Paul says:

> "Discharge your obligations to all men; pay tax and toll, reverence and respect, to those to whom they are due..."

This passage bears a notable resemblance to the words of Jesus in the "tribute penny" episode recounted in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25):

There appears to be one major difference: Jesus differentiates between what is due to man and what is due to God; Paul takes the same basic theme but reworks it in such a manner that the two are ultimately the same—the authorities are agents of God and, therefore, by inference, what is due to them is also due to God.

The inclusion of this passage in Romans suggests that Paul knew of the "tribute penny" tradition about Jesus. This supposition may, in turn, be a further indication of the soundness of the establishment of this tradition which is reflected in the Synoptics.



The "Tribute Penny"... denarius of Emperior Tiberius, 14-37 A.D.

In the forgoing account we have seen that Paul did have some very definite and possibly unique attitudes towards money and finance. These attitudes are reflected in his letters, sometimes in what seems to be an inconsistency of manner. However, these differences can usually be resolved, at least in theory—for we will almost certainly never have much more than theories upon which to base our judgement in these matters.

FOOTNOTES

8. Roetzel, op. cit., p. 49
9. Keith W. Nickle, *The Collection* (London, 1966), p. 59
   J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London, 1959), p. 287 is not so certain.
10. Nickle, op. cit., p. 26
11. Bornkamm, op. cit., pp. 40-41
12. Ibid., p. 58
13. Munck., op. cit., p. 290
14. Bornkamm, op. cit., pp. 245-246
15. Munck, op. cit., p. 61
16. Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 210